(iv) Rationalization of Duty Entitlement Pass Book (DEPB) rates for steel exports have been carried out to boost exports.

(v) A Steel Exporters' Forum has been set up to help steel exporters overcome bottlenecks in exports.

(vi) Enhanced project financing to steel sector by All India Financial Institutions and relaxation of ECB norms has been recommended.

(vii) Government has set up an Empowered Committee to examine and assist specific Research and Development Projects to improve technology for steel making and enhance quality of Indian Steel.

(viii) Floor Prices have been fixed by the Government in December, 1998 to prevent the cheap imports of cetain categories of steel.

SAIL has also taken the following steps for improving its performance:

* Greater emphasis on cost control measures.
* Introduction of Voluntary Retirement Scheme (VRS) for employees.
* Market oriented production and product-mix.
* Improvement in techno-economic parameters.
* Increasing sales through aggressive and customer oriented marketing.
* Exploring new ways to bridge the resource gaps through business restructuring initiatives.

Sleel Production by Private Sector

2133. SHRI LAJPAT RAI: Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state:

(a) the target of steel production by the private sector in the current year;

(b) the actual production achieved in the first quarter;

(c) whether private sector can fulfil the demands of steel of this country; and

(d) the average production ratio of private sector every year?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI RAMESH BAIS): (a) Government do not fix or momitor the target of steel production by private sector units. However, the Development Commissioner for Iron and Steel estimates total demand and availability of finished steel on an annual basis. Based on this, the estimated availability of finished steel from the private sector units during 1998-99 is 15.012 Million Tonnes.

(b) The actual production of the finished steel achieved in the first quarter in respect of the private sector is 3 753 Million Tonnes.

(c) The Working Group on Iron and Steel for the IXth Five Year Plan has projected that the private sector units together with the Public Sector units would, by and large be in a position to fulfil the projected demand of steel of the country.

(d) the contribution of the private sector in the overall production of finished steel during 1997-98 and 1998-99 (upto Jan., 1999) arc approximately 62% and 66.87% respectively.

इस्पात संयंत्रों की स्थापना

2134. **प्रो. रामबख्श सिंह वर्मा** :

श्रीमती मालती शर्मा :

क्या इस्पात और खान मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि:

(क) देश में 1997-98 तक कितने इस्पात संयंत्र स्थापित हैं;

(ख) क्या सरकार द्वारा नौंवी पंचवर्षीय योजना में इस्पात संयंत्र स्थापित करने का प्रावधान रखा गया हैं; और

(ग) यदि हां, तो उसका ब्यौरा क्या हैं?

इस्पात और खान मंत्रालय में राज्य मंत्री (श्री रमेश बैस) : (क) उपलब्ध जानकारी के अनुसार, उदारीकरण के बाद 1997-98 तक देश में छह इस्पात संयंत्र (एक लाख टन वार्षिक क्षमता से अधिक क्षमता वाले) स्थापित किए गए हैं।

(ख) और (ग) नौंवी पंचवर्षीय योजनावधि में इस्पात संयंत्र लगाने के लिए सरकार ने कोई प्रावधान नहीं किया हैं।

Development of Mining Sector in Bihar

2135. SHRI JANARDAN YADAV: Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state:

(a) the amount of money allotted to Bihar for the development of mining sector during last and current financial years;

(b) the actual amount utilized by the State during the above said period;

(c) whether more funds have been sought by the State for this purpose during the current year; and

(d) if so, the reaction of Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI RAMESH BA1S): (a) and (b) As per the information furnished by the State Government of Bihar, the details of allocation made for mineral sector in the State Budget for the financial years 1997-98 and 1998-99 and details of expenditure against these budget provisions are given in the Statement *(see* below)

(c) The State Government has not indicated any details as regards whether more funds were sought by the State Government for this purpose during the current financial year.

(d) Does not arise in view of part (c) above.

Statement

Details of allocation made in the State Budget for mineral sector and expenditure made out of the, provision.

RS. IN LAKHS

	YEAR	STATE BUDGET PROVISION	EXPEN-DITURE
Plan	1997-98	389.00	318.60
	1998-99	600.00	17.00*
Non Plan	1997-98	415.00	304.80
	1998-99	1524.53	589.71'

*Approximate upto December, 1998

Referral Price of Steel

2136. SHRI V.N. GADGIL: Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have decided to fix a referral price for steel to stop dumping but an increased price than, what was decided by interministeral commute; and

(b) whether the decision would benefit some people by Rs. 5000 crores as mentioned by Mr. Mohan Guruswamy in his recent article in Asian Age?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI RAMESH BAIS): (a) Government has fixed floor prices for certain flat products of finished steel including seconds and defectives to restrict their cheap imports. The Working Group constituted by the Finance Minister under the Chairmanship of Shri CM. Vasudev, while, inter-alia recommended fixation of floor prices, did not decide any specific price to be used as the floor price.

(b) Does not arise in view of (a) above.